

Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Economic Stimulus Projects

Projects for 2010

1. Bates Creek Watershed Restoration Project

Estimated Cost - \$1,080,000

Secured Funding - \$275,000

Requested Funding - \$805,000

This project is intended to restore aspen communities in the headwaters of Bates Creek, and big sagebrush communities in the lower elevations. Aspen communities are mature with areas of dead trees occurring throughout the stands. Moreover, aspen regeneration is limited due to the abundance of mature trees, consequently, coniferous species and big sagebrush are encroaching. Presently, big sagebrush and conifers dominate several aspen stands, and if these stands, and additional stands are allowed to remain stagnant, conifer species and big sagebrush will eventually dominate all aspen stands.

2. North Laramie Range Habitat Restoration Project

Estimated Cost - \$1,080,000

Secured Funding - \$350,000

Requested Funding - \$730,000

The mountain shrub community, specifically true mountain mahogany, is mature to decadent, with very little regeneration. The aspen communities are primarily mature with areas of dead (remnant) trees occurring throughout the stands. Presently, big sagebrush and conifers dominate several aspen stands, and if these stands, and additional stands, are allowed to remain stagnant, conifer species and big sagebrush will continue to encroach, and eventually become the dominant species. This project will delineate mountain shrub and aspen communities that are in peril within these watersheds, and develop treatments to regenerate these stands.

3. Orin Weir

Estimated Cost - \$100,000

Secured Funding - \$2,500

Requested Funding - \$100,000

Orin Weir is a concrete structure used for stream flow gauging that traverses the North Platte River approximately 4 river miles upstream of Glendo Reservoir, and is a barrier to upstream movement of walleye (and probably many other fish species). Creating passage through Orin Weir will give Glendo Reservoir walleye access to over 60 miles of additional spawning habitat and increase walleye angling opportunities along the North Platte River. Creating passage through Orin Weir is also necessary for the possible reintroduction of sauger, a fish species native to the North Platte River that was extirpated over 100 years ago.

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4. Morton Diversion Dam

Estimated Cost - \$100,000

Secured Funding - \$2,500

Requested Funding - \$100,000

Morton Diversion Dam is a concrete structure that traverses the North Platte River approximately 52 river miles upstream of Glendo Reservoir, and is a barrier to upstream movement of walleye (and probably many other fish species). Morton Diversion Dam is no longer used for irrigation and currently serves no purpose. Creating passage through Morton Diversion Dam will give Glendo Reservoir walleye access to approximately 13 miles of additional spawning habitat and increase walleye angling opportunities along the North Platte River. Creating passage through Morton Diversion Dam is also necessary for the possible reintroduction of sauger, a fish species native to the North Platte River that was extirpated over 100 years ago.

5. Daniel Hatchery Renovation Project
\$5,350,000

This facility holds Bonneville and Colorado River cutthroat trout brood stocks, which are critical for restoration of these native species in Wyoming. Project calls for installing three-phase service to Daniel Hatchery to dramatically reduce electrical consumption. Resize and replace existing antiquated well pump system with highly efficient, variable frequency drive pumps backed with an electrical generator. Water conditioning improvement includes installing low head oxygenation systems to remove harmful levels of dissolved nitrogen gas and increase chronically low dissolved oxygen levels. Project would include constructing modern brood stock holding facilities and installing filters and ultraviolet irradiation systems to protect water supply from Whirling Disease and viral infections.

6. Fence Inventory and Modification

Estimated Cost: \$2,000,000

Secured Funds: \$1,000,000

Requested Funds: \$1,000,000

Historic fences frequently cause conflicts with migrating wildlife between winter ranges in lower elevations and summer ranges in the mountains. Private landowners and federal land management agencies are financially strapped and frequently do not have time or money to improve fences for easier passage of wildlife. The Green River Valley Land Trust has taken the initiative to develop a program that will employ contractors to inventory fence conditions in areas of high significance to migrating big game herd units and also fund modification or reconstructing fences that are more acceptable for wildlife. Matching funds are requested to employ a company to do inventory and subsequent fence modification where needed.

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7. Wyoming Front Aspen Restoration Project

Estimated Cost: 1,500,000

Secured Funds: \$600,000

Requested Funds: \$900,000

This is a stewardship project on BLM lands that the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation has been coordinating. This project aims to treat 9,000 acres of conifer encroached aspen stands over a ten year period along the Wyoming Range front in a true landscape scale habitat improvement project. Two different timber companies have been employed to extract merchantable timber and drop conifers to prepare for prescribed burning activities. Also, a different company has been employed to extract Christmas Trees for resale, and a fourth company is investigating the possibility of using mulch from this project in oil and gas field reclamation in Sublette County.

8. Cottonwood Regeneration and Invasive Species Reduction on the Green River

Estimated Cost \$500,000

Secured Funding \$0

Requested Funding \$500,000

This project would be given to a private contractor but involve the Wyoming Game and Fish Department and other stakeholders, including Seedskaadee National Wildlife Refuge, the Bureau of Land Management, and willing landowners. Project goals would be to re-establish or enhance native cottonwoods along portions of the Green River in southwestern Wyoming and treat or remove invasive species, such as salt cedar and Russian olive, that encroach on and degrade native cottonwood stands. These habitat treatments will help provide important nesting habitat for Species of Greatest Conservation Need, such as Bald Eagles, Great Blue Herons, and Swainson's Hawks, and Yellow-billed Cuckoos, as well as riparian obligate Neotropical migratory species, such as Eastern Kingbirds, Bullock's Orioles, Song Sparrows, and American Goldfinches.

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9. **Regional Office Expansion/Renovation Projects**
4,000,000

With recent changes in personnel and the current age of the regional offices, several upgrades and remodeling projects need to be completed on the Lander and Cody Regional Offices. The Cody and Lander offices are in need of remodeling and additions to accommodate the work forces located in those offices.

- Cody Regional Office \$2,000,000
- Lander Regional Office \$2,000,000

Game and Fish list of projects for submission on a Federal economic stimulus bill. Following are our suggestions from Game and Fish:

10. **Lab Facility Forensic/Fish Health Project**
\$10,000,000

This project would fund a new 10,000 square foot, state-of-the-art wildlife forensic and fish health laboratory in Laramie, Wyoming. A new laboratory would allow for expanded analytical techniques, which in turn, assists law enforcement in prosecuting the serious violators of wildlife laws. It would also assist in protecting the fisheries resource by increasing disease diagnostic capabilities. A laboratory of this nature could be used as a regional reference facility for the Western United States.

11. **Laramie River Improvement Project (City of Laramie), Albany County, Wyoming**

Estimated Cost \$1,200,000

Secured funding \$ 18,000

Requested Funding \$1,182,000

This is a cooperative project with the Laramie River Conservation District, and City of Laramie Beautification Committee to improve the Laramie River through the City of Laramie. This project involves improvements (bank stabilization and fisheries habitat) on over 5 miles of river through town. An estimated 7500 feet of river needs some sort of improvement with an estimated cost of \$100 per foot along with proposed bike paths, recreational trails and pond developments. Preliminary design work will be completed by February 2009.

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12. Auburn Hatchery Renovation and Small Hydroelectric Project
\$3,890,000

Improvements to this facility would improve rearing conditions for a brood stock of the fine spotted version of the Yellowstone cutthroat trout (species of greatest conservation need). Improvements proposed for the 70 year old facility including: remodeling the hatchery and office for energy efficiency; installation of ultraviolet irradiation systems to protect against viral diseases and Whirling Disease; filtration to remove waste and installation of oxygenation equipment to boost oxygen in order to reuse water; raze and replace the 70' year raceways with modern 20' circular units; and install a hydroelectric generator in the water supply line (10" pipe with a 210' drop) to meet electrical demand on station with surplus to the grid.

13. Lander Flood Protection Project, Middle Fork Popo Agie River, Fremont County, Wyoming

Estimated Cost \$4,043,000

Secured funding \$ none

Requested Funding \$4,043,000

This is a cooperative project started over 5 years ago with the Popo Agie Conservation District, City of Lander, and Fremont County Commission as project sponsors with consultation from the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. The goal of the project is to protect Lander from a 100-year flood by the Middle Fork Popo Agie River but do so in a manner that increases trout habitat in this urban setting. This project would protect Lander from an estimated 100-year flood damage of over \$8 million dollars, while at the same time improving the local fisheries. A draft EA for the watershed project plan was completed in October 2008 and final assessment planned for 2009.

14. Cody Canal Dam Bypass Channel, South Fork Shoshone River, Park County, Wyoming

Estimated Cost \$1,000,000

Secured funding \$0

Requested Funding \$1,000,000

The Cody Canal diversion is a push-up, rock structure that is a partial fish barrier. Replacement to a fish-friendly, permanent structure is required. Objectives are to pass fish, reduce instream maintenance, and improve water quality. This structure would save at least 50,082 fish from being stranded and killed per a recently completed study of fish lost in a 401 hours of sampling. Fish screens would save nine fish species, six are native species and 2 are species of special concern in Wyoming. The primary objective is to reduce or eliminate fish lost through entrainment. Preliminary designs are under contract with a consulting engineering firm.

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15. North Platte River Public Fishing Area Enhancements

Estimated Cost - \$3,500,000

Secured Funding - \$0

Requested Funding - \$3,500,000

Create or enhance fish habitat on sections of the North Platte River between Gray Reef Reservoir and Dave Johnston Power Plant where public access currently exists. Potential activities could include but not be limited to: Bank stabilization and reclamation to decrease fine sediment input. Construction of rock and/or wood structures to create and maintain deep water habitats, provide overhead cover and enhance spawning substrates.

16. Lusby Public Fishing Area Enhancements

Estimated Cost - \$150,000

Secured Funding - \$0

Requested Funding \$150,000

A bank is failing at the Lusby Public Fishing Area and will soon threaten our road between the two parking areas. We did riprap work in the same location 20 years ago to protect the road but we are facing the same problem a little farther downstream. With the road in place and significant infrastructure adjacent to the road a series of flow retard bars are necessary.

17. Highway 26-287 Reconstruction on Rosies Ridge

Estimated Cost – \$ 6, 000,000

Secured Funding – \$ Partial funding has already been provide by WYDOT for the highway reconstruction

Requested Funding - \$2,000,000

The Wyoming Department of Transportation is currently involved in a reconstruction project on Highway 26-287. Wildlife crossing studies indicate that Rosies Ridge is a focal point for elk, moose, mule deer, black bears, grizzly bears, mountain lions and other forest carnivores to cross the highway. This proposal is for a bridge placed milepost 10.5 to reduce wildlife collisions. This in turn will help to maintain viable linkage zones for important wildlife species that attract visitors to the southern Yellowstone region from around the world.

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18. Critical Wildlife Habitat and Watershed Restoration, North Zone Bridger-Teton National Forest

Estimated Cost: \$800,000 (First year--\$200,000) (2-5 year annual average cost—\$150,000)

Secured Funding: \$50,000 (Forest Service), \$40,000 (Pending Grant from Patagonia Inc.) and \$10,000 (Wyoming Trails—trail crews)

Requested Funding: \$700,000

Project objectives are to improve the quality of wildlife habitat for a wide range of species by limiting motorized use to designated trails, closing and restoring approximately 600 miles of unauthorized routes located in the Jackson Hole area, including the pronghorn migration corridor and grizzly bear primary conservation area.

19. Fence reconstruction along the National Elk Refuge and Highway 26-89-191

Estimated Cost – \$100,000

Secured Funding – \$ 0

Requested Funding - \$100,000

Fencing along the National Elk Refuge keeps elk off Highway 26-89-191. With only one side of the highway fenced animals often travel along the eight-foot fence inside the highway right-of-way. The proposed project includes building two additional new wildlife jumps to allow for animals trapped in the highway right-of-way a path to get through the fence and on to the National Elk Refuge. The project also includes replacing wooden gates and a fishing access gate. Overall project goal is to facilitate animal movement and reduce wildlife vehicle collisions while maintaining wildlife populations near Jackson Hole, Wyoming.